



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
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Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
State Sen. Paul Cicarella and State Sen. Henri Martin
Public Testimony
February 7, 2023

Testimony in Support of S.B. 936: An Act Concerning Workforce Development

Co-Chairs Haddad and Slap, Vice-Chairs Rochelle and Mahr, Ranking Members Kelly and Haines, and distinguished members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee: we would like to thank the committee for hearing testimony on **S.B. 936: An Act Concerning Workforce Development**.

Specifically, we offer our strong support for two of our underlying workforce development measures to be included in this encompassing legislation: **S.B. 154: An Act Requiring a Performance Audit of Certain Workforce Development Programs**; and **S.B. 155: An Act Concerning Development of an Alternative Pathways Program for High School Students**.

We thoughtfully crafted the two measures after spending the past year meeting with more than 30 stakeholders statewide to develop solutions to the widespread challenges that employers, recent graduates and job-seekers face in today's environment. These stakeholders include relevant state agencies, higher- and primary education institution leaders, nonprofits and employers.

The meetings enabled us to arrive at the question that is key to improving our workforce development programs to benefit job-seekers and employers alike: *How do the dozens of workforce development programs in the state, and related public resources allocated to these programs, align?*

S.B. 154 and S.B. 155 endeavor to deliver answers to this central question to eliminate duplication of workforce programs and best allocate valuable state resources.

S.B. 154 is an important proposal to measure the effectiveness of the state's current workforce development programs in meeting the state's workforce needs. As stated, our meetings revealed that Connecticut has multiple workforce development programs that require millions of dollars to administer.

These services are administered across state agencies, institutions, and other entities. Because there has not been a standardized process to track, report and analyze this information, we cannot be certain of what programs are an effective use of resources. More, we are equally uncertain of missed opportunities of cross-agency or institution collaboration to streamline services for a high return on investment.

S.B. 155 is a complementary measure that similarly addresses workforce development gaps, specifically in the trades. There are thousands of high school seniors in Connecticut that do not attend college or begin a career in the trades immediately following graduation. It is important for us to find a path for these young people that may be unaware of the available well-paying jobs in the trades and manufacturing with a high school diploma. Our legislation seeks to task the Connecticut Dept. of Labor to identify these graduates that lack a career path between four and six months after completing high school—a pivotal time for young people entering the workforce—and provide them with information on alternative career pathways in Connecticut.

Jobs in the trades and manufacturing are not only vital to the state's infrastructure, but they also will provide thousands of young people with the ability to prosper here in Connecticut.

We urge the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee to act favorably on S.B. 936. Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to Connecticut's future workforce.

Handwritten signature of Paul Cicarella in black ink.

Sen. Paul Cicarella
34th District

Handwritten signature of Henri Martin in black ink.

Sen. Henri Martin
31st District